



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HOUSTON AND PHILIPPINE CORPORATIONS AND THEIR PRINCIPLES
CHARGED WITH ALIEN SMUGGLING AND VISA FRAUD**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton, Acting Special Agent in Charge Peter Smith, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Ralph G. Diaz Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced this morning the indictment of Omni Consortium, Multicultural Professionals, Multicultural Education Consultants, Florita Tolentino, Noel Tolentino, Angelica Tolentino, Cesar Librodo and Owen Cruz. They have been charged with Conspiracy to Commit Alien Smuggling and Visa Fraud, Mail Fraud and Money Laundering.

The indictment alleges that beginning in December 2001, the defendants devised a scheme to smuggle Philippine teachers into the United States for the purpose of exploiting them. It further alleges that in order to secure H-1B visas, Omni Consortium, Multicultural Professionals and Noel Tolentino offered all expense paid trips to the Philippines to school administrators in the United States on the condition the school district would file petitions for entry with the United States Government for at least 10 teachers for every administrator who traveled.

According to the Indictment, Florita and Noel Tolentino approached Philippine teachers and lured the teachers into the United States using promises of prosperous teaching jobs, permanent residency status and the ability to bring their families into the United States. Based on these false promises the Philippine teachers were induced to pay defendants large fees at usurious rates.

Defendants Cesar Librodo and Owen Cruz loaned money to the teachers for a period of eighteen months at an interest rate of five-percent per month, compounded monthly for an annual interest rate of over sixty percent. If the alien teacher missed a payment, an additional fifteen percent was added to her debt. Librodo and Cruz required the alien teachers to have a co-maker on the loan who would remain in the Philippines and whom defendants could file charges against and place in jail should the alien teacher miss two or more scheduled payments.

Once in the United States, the alien teachers had to seek permission from the defendants to leave the premises for any reason and were not allowed to have any form of transportation. According to the Indictment, if any teacher spoke out about not having employment or wished to seek employment on her own, the Tolentino's threatened to have her visa cancelled and the teacher deported to the Philippines where she would owe her debt to Librodo and Cruz. In order

to ensure the teachers did not attempt to find their own employment, the defendants held the alien teachers' original transcripts, certifications and credentials which were necessary for the alien teachers to secure employment on their own.

Many of the teachers in the Philippines, signed what they believed to be legitimate contracts for employment with Texas school districts when they were actually signing forged documents generated by the defendants. Based on these fraudulent documents the alien teachers paid large fees to the defendants with the belief they were coming to the United States to work as a teacher only to find out upon arriving in the United States that they did not have a teaching position.

This case is being investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation with assistance from the Internal Revenue Service, Department State Department, Social Security Administration, Department of Labor and the Department of Education. Assistant United States Attorney Brandy Gardes is prosecuting this case for the government.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

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